

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 KUALA 03991 091327Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /067 W

-----050495 091329Z /46

R 090855Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4083

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KUALA LUMPUR 3991

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, MY

SUBJECT: UMNO WINS BY-ELECTION FOR HARUN SEAT

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 2353

1. SUMMARY. THE UMNO CANDIDATE WON A BY-ELECTION MAY 6 TO FILL THE SELANGOR STATE ASSEMBLY SEAT PREVIOUSLY HELD BY FORMER CHIEF MINISTER DATUK HARUN IDRIS, WHO IS NOW SERVING A SENTENCE FOR CORRUPTION. THE ELECTION OUTCOME, A SUBSTANTIAL UMNO VICTORY, BUT CONSIDERABLY REDUCED FROM THE MARGINS HARUN ONCE ENJOYED, MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO GAGE WHAT EFFECT HARUN'S CONVICTION HAS HAD ON UMNO STRENGTH IN SELANGOR OR TO PREDICT WHEN ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD. END SUMMARY.

2. ISHAK BIN PANGAT ALIAS SHUFAAT, THE UNITED MALAYSIA NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (UMNO) AND NATIONAL FRONT (NF) CANDIDATE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 KUALA 03991 091327Z

DEFEATED TWO OPPONENTS IN A BY-ELECTION FOR THE MORIB SEAT IN THE SELANGOR STATE ASSEMBLY, THE SEAT HELD BY FORMER SELANGOR CHIEF MINISTER AND UMNO YOUTH PRESIDENT DATUK HARUN IDRIS BEFORE HE WAS CONVICTED OF CORRUPTION AND BEGAN SERVING A SIX-YEAR SENTENCE (REFTEL). ISHAK RECEIVED 3,740 VOTES TO 2,229 VOTES FOR INDEPENDENT ISMAIL SEKAK AND 583 VOTES FOR INDIEPENDENT ER CHUE CHING. THE 1,511 VOTE MAJORITY WAS

CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN THE 3,010 HARUN ENJOYED IN THE 1974 ELECTION.

3. PRIME MINISTER DATUK HUSSEIN ONN ON MAY 7 HAILED THE NF VICTORY IN THE MORIB ELECTION AS PROOF OF THE PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT AND OF THE NF'S STRENGTH. HOWEVER, THE NEW STRAITS TIMES (NST), WHICH USUALLY REFLECTS GOM THINKING, CALLED THE MORIB OUTCOME "NOT FULLY SATISFYING" FOR THE NF IN ITS MAY 8 EDITORIAL. THE NST POINTED OUT THAT ISHAK'S 55 PER CENT OF THE VOTE WAS MUCH LOWER THAN HARUN'S 76 PER CENT IN 1974, AND THAT, SINCE 40 PERCENT OF THE VOTERS IN MORIB ARE NON-MALAYS, A SIZEABLE NUMBER OF MALAYS VOTED FOR THE MALAY INDEPENDENT ISMAIL. THE NST EDITORIAL ALSO COMMENTED THAT THE ELECTION RESULT ARGUED NEITHER FOR IMMEDIATE ELECTIONS NOR FOR A DELAY.

4. COMMENT: WE ARE INCLINED TO SHARE THE NST'S UNUSUAL DISSENTING ASSESSMENT OF THE MORIB ELECTION RESULT RATHER THAN THE PM'S DISTINCTLY MORE UPBEAT PROTRAYAL OF THE OUTCOME. ALTHOUGH THE NF SUCCEEDED IN ELECTING ITS CANDIDATE, THE VICTORY WAS FAR FROM OVERWHELMING, DESPITE THE MASSIVE EFFORTS OF THE NF AND THE FACT THAT NEITHER OF NF CANDIDATE ISHAK'S OPPONENTS HAD THE ACTIVE SUPPORT OF ANY OPPOSITION PARTY (ALTHOUGH ISMAIL AND ER WERE RUMORED TO HAVE UNDERGROUND SUPPORT FROM THE ISLAMIC PARTY AND THE DEMOCRATIC ACTION PARTY, RESPECTIVELY). ACCORDING TO ONE ASTUTE LOCAL POLITICIAN, HARUN SIGNALED HIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 KUALA 03991 091327Z

SUPPORTERS (FROM HIS JAIL CELL, VIA HIS WIFE) THAT HE WOULD NOT OBJECT TO THEIR VOTING FOR ISHAK. HOWEVER, IN THE ABSENCE OF A FORMAL ENDORSEMENT BY THEIR HERO, IT APPEARS THAT A NUMBER OF HARUN SUPPORTERS CAST PROTEST VOTES FOR ISHAK'S OPPONENTS, PARTICULARLY ISMAIL.

5. MANY POLITICAL OBSERVERS WERE EXPECTING THE MORIB BY-ELECTION TO BE THE FINAL TEST OF THE NF'S POPULARITY BEFORE PM HUSSEIN CALLED GENERAL ELECTIONS. IN THE EVENT, THOUGH, THE SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS OUTCOME AND APPARENT RESIDUE OF ANTIESTABLISHMENT SENTIMENT AMONG MALAY VOTERS HAS NOT PROVIDED A CLEAR READING OF NF ELECTION PROSPECTS OR CLARIFIED THE ISSUE OF SPECIFIC TIMING OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS. NONETHELESS, THE CAMPAIGNING IN MORIB AND DIVISIONAL UMNO MEETINGS NOW BEING HELD THROUGHOUT PENINSULAR MALAYSIA PREPARATORY TO THE IMPORTANT UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY SCHEDULED FOR LATE JUNE HAS RAISED THE VOLUME OF POLITICAL RHETORIC IN RECENT WEEKS. FOR THE MOMENT THE VAST MAJORITY OF LOCAL POLITICAL OBSERVERS ARE CONVINCED THAT NATIONAL ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD PRIOR TO THE START OF THE MUSLIM FASTING MONTH IN EARLY AUGUST, BUT THE DEBATE REMAINS CENTERED ON WHETHER THE PM WILL CALL ELECTIONS BEFORE

OR AFTER THE UMNO ASSEMBLY.

MILLER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ELECTION RESULTS, OPPOSITION PARTIES, SPECIAL ELECTIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 09 may 1978  
**Decapton Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decapton Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978KUALA03991  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780196-0338  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** KUALA LUMPUR  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780579/aaaacpof.tel  
**Line Count:** 118  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 0b8f2aa2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 78 KUALA LUMPUR 2353  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 01 may 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 2750938  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** UMNO WINS BY-ELECTION FOR HARUN SEAT  
**TAGS:** PINT, MY  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkvgwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/0b8f2aa2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014